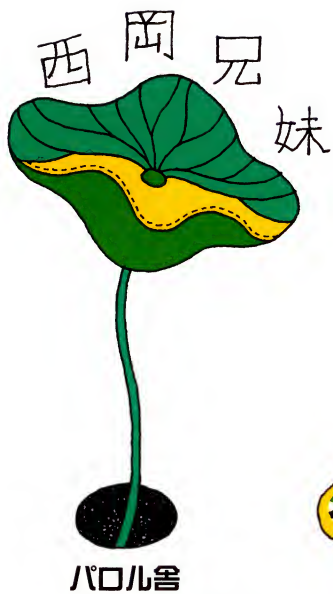
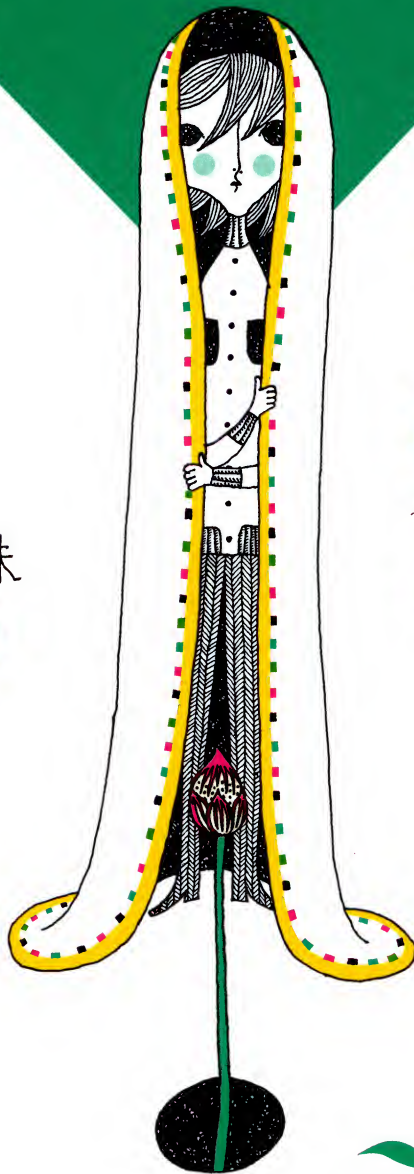
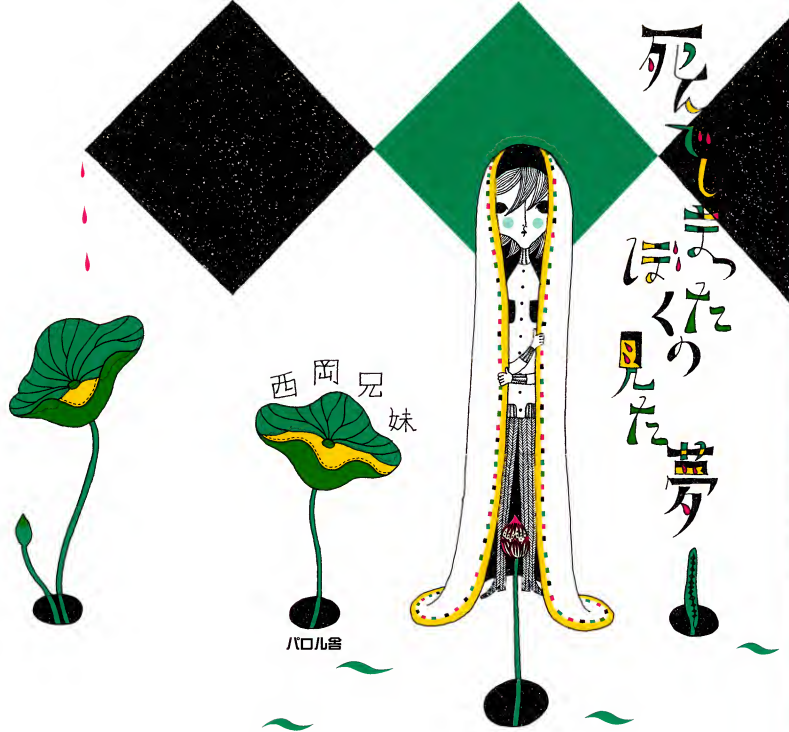


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死んでしまったぼくの見た夢

西岡兄妹

ハロル舎

死んでしまったぼくの見た夢 西岡兄妹 ハロル舎



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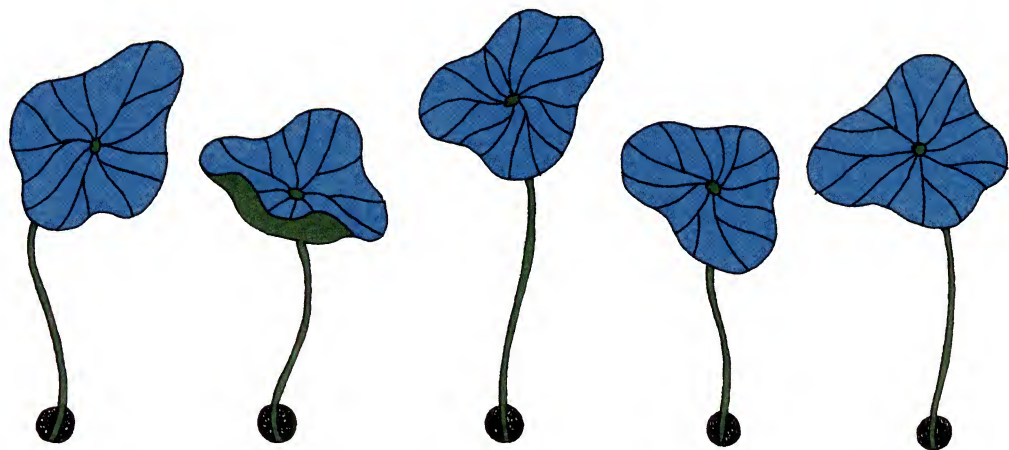


死んでしまった
僕の見た夢

The
Dream
I Had
When
I Died

Habanero Scans
pepperanon.blogspot.com
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manga.megchan.com/blog

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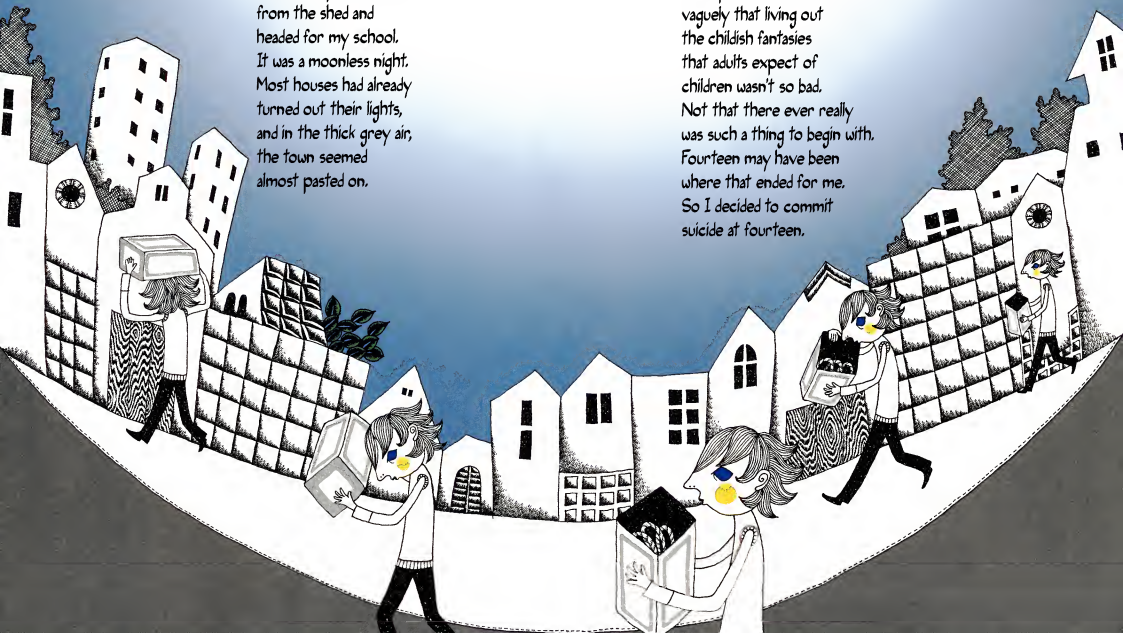


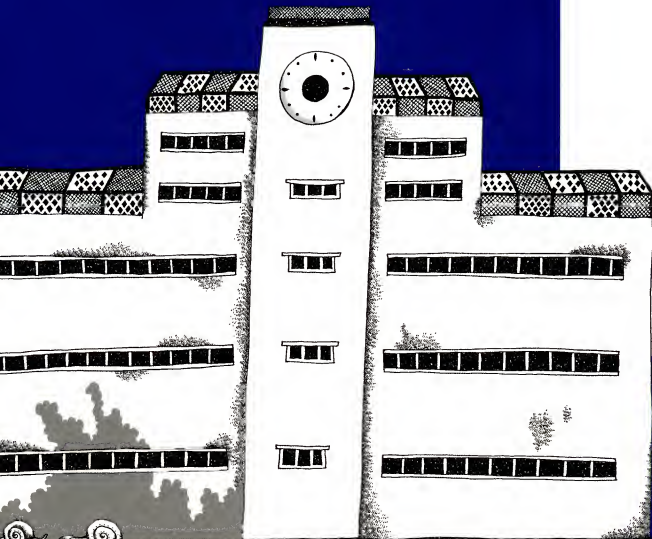


Ever since I was little,
I was determined to die
when I was fourteen.
There was no reason.
Living held no meaning
for me, so of course
I felt no meaning
in death either.

On the night of my
fourteenth birthday,
I took a rope and crate
from the shed and
headed for my school.
It was a moonless night.
Most houses had already
turned out their lights,
and in the thick grey air,
the town seemed
almost pasted on.


Why fourteen?
I don't even know myself.
Perhaps I used to think
vaguely that living out
the childish fantasies
that adults expect of
children wasn't so bad.
Not that there ever really
was such a thing to begin with.
Fourteen may have been
where that ended for me.
So I decided to commit
suicide at fourteen.





I arrived at the school.
With no lights and no one around,
the building seemed larger than usual.
This place, where children wasted away
their lives bit by bit in the daytime,
felt like the perfect place for me to die.
Maybe I was feeling a little mischievous.
I tied my rope to the school's iron
fence and stood on the crate.
Then I put the rope around my neck
and kicked the crate away with all my might.



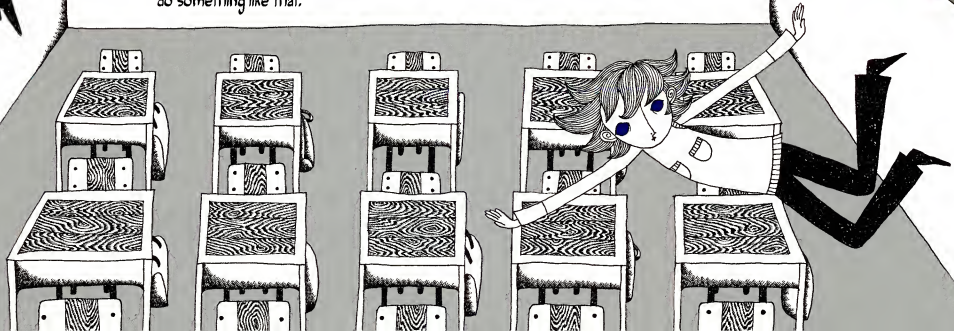


"I'm going to die now,"
I thought clearly,
and in that instant,
I lost consciousness.
Next thing I knew,
I was floating around
diagonally above
my dead body,
gazing down
at myself.

I felt my head
jerked towards the
sky. My body, though
not yet having reached its
full adult weight, understood
its purpose was to end my life.
I was still conscious for a moment.
In the silence, I could only hear
the pounding of my heart.
While my heartbeat grew
quieter little by little,
my consciousness
began to fade.

I floated towards the classroom.
There was my desk.
Tomorrow or the next day,
flowers would be set on it,
and my teacher would give
a speech about how precious
life is, all the while secretly
thinking, "That little shit.
What a pain in the ass."
I was somewhat curious
to see whether any of my
school friends would cry,
but I wasn't sure I had any
friends close enough to
do something like that.

"So the soul really does exist," I thought.
I had thought this would be the end,
but it wasn't. That was somewhat annoying,
but there was nothing to be done about it.
I had chosen death, so if this is what death
entailed, I had no choice but to accept it.
I stared absentmindedly down at myself
for a while. Not a single person passed by.
The sight of my corpse, dangling all alone
from the iron gate, stirred no curiosity
nor emotion. Bored, I took my leave.



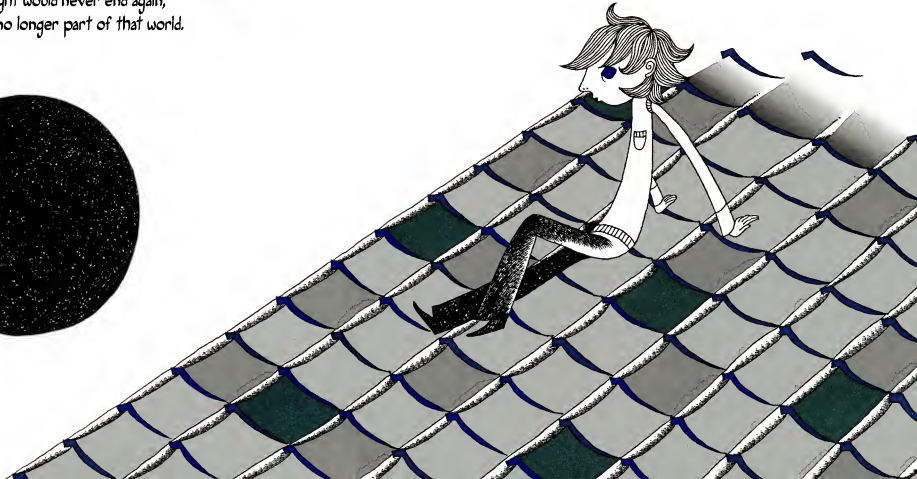


At any rate, I headed home.
My mother and father were still asleep.
My parents have slept in separate rooms
since I was in fifth grade. I don't know why.
Tomorrow morning when they get the news
of my death, they'll probably both wall in grief.
They will probably suffer, struggling to accept
the death of their son, who had given them
no explanation and left behind no final words.
But for whatever reason, I didn't feel sorry
about it at all. I went to my little sister's room.
She slept deeply, not suspecting a thing.
I pitied her a little; still in elementary school,
she would now have to bear the burden of
our parents' hopes and love all alone.



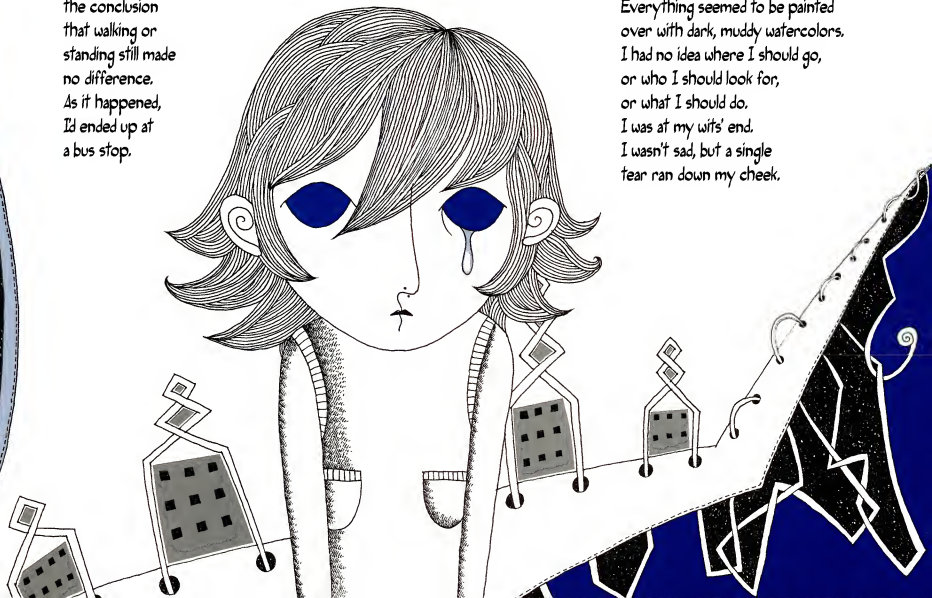
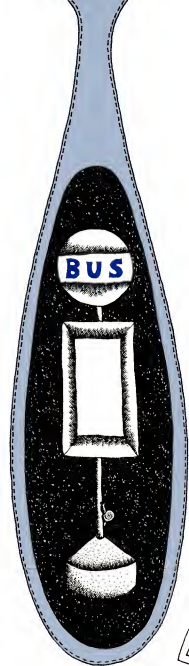
How long had I been waiting?
The dawn showed no sign of coming,
Just as I started to feel a little uneasy,
a black sun shot into the eastern sky
like a ball bouncing up. An unspeakable
terror came over me. I felt like
I was being forced to face the fact
that the night would never end again,
that I was no longer part of that world.

I waited for sunrise
up on the rooftop.
Anyway, nothing will
happen before morning.
I began to feel a little bored.



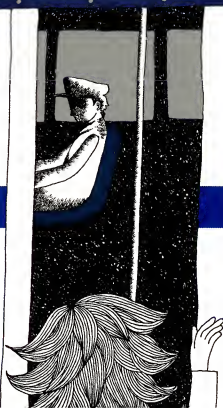
I came to a stop.
I had come to
the conclusion
that walking or
standing still made
no difference.
As it happened,
I'd ended up at
a bus stop.

I walked through town.
There were no lights, no people.
Everything seemed to be painted
over with dark, muddy watercolors.
I had no idea where I should go,
or who I should look for,
or what I should do.
I was at my wife's end.
I wasn't sad, but a single
tear ran down my cheek.

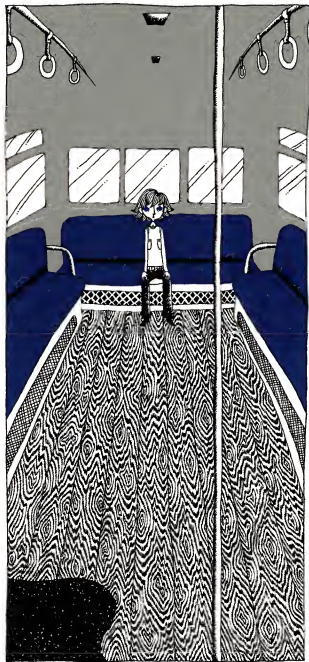


"But I don't have any money."
As I hesitated, the driver
shouted a bit restlessly,
"You don't need money.
Just hurry up and get in."
He didn't seem angry, though.
As if his voice had given me
the push I needed,
I climbed on the bus.

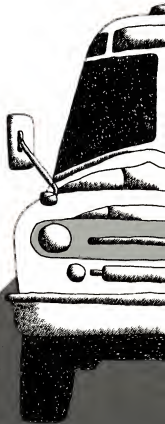
I never knew there was a bus stop here.
Suddenly there was a loud clatter,
and I saw a bus heading my way.
It stopped right in front of me.
It wasn't the sort of bus we have nowadays,
but rather one of those bonnet buses like
I'd only ever seen on old TV shows.
The door opened.
"Get in," the bus driver said.




The bus raced on without stopping or slowing down. Before I knew it, we had left the town and entered an unfamiliar rural district, eventually coming to stop in what appeared to be a dark forest.




Then I took a seat at the very back.
"Next stop, the botanical garden!"
The bus suddenly began to move
and raced through the monochrome
streets at high speed.
The driver didn't speak.
I was the only passenger.
A prickle of anxiety started in my
soles and crawled slowly up my legs.
But this was the first person
that I'd seen since I died.
Aimless as I was, it was strangely
easy to accept that there was
nothing to do but leave my fate in
the hands of this strange guide.





Before me was the
entrance to a garden.
No one was around.
Without paying,
I entered the garden.
As I walked down a
narrow path surrounded
by colorless flowers,
I could see a pale-blue
light faintly far away.



"Last stop, the botanical garden.
Make sure you have all of
your belongings with you
when you exit the bus,"
the driver said professionally.
And then, in an entirely different
tone that brooked no questions,
he suddenly added, "What are you
doing? Hurry up and get off."
I exited the bus without a word.



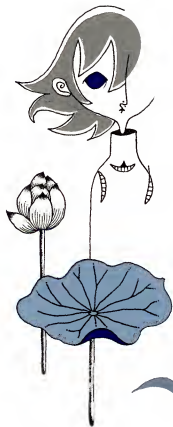
I had nowhere else to go.
I walked briskly along the road that
sloped gently up towards the light.
The light was coming from
a glass-paneled dome.
On the door, there was a sign
that read "Tropical Plant Exhibit."
Sensing something inside,
I went in without hesitating.
Untended tropical plants whose
names I didn't know formed a dense
forest in the humid air inside.



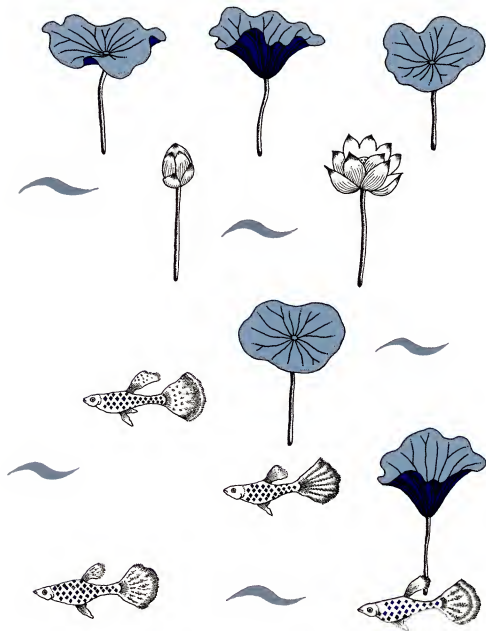
Following a sign that read "this way,"
I came to a pond filled with lotus flowers.
They spread out beautifully
over the surface of the water,
bathed in fluorescent light
that made the white-parts
bluish and the red-parts pinkish.
"It's like heaven," I thought suddenly.
"Maybe this is heaven for me."
With that thought, I felt an
apathetic despair, and for a while,
I just stood there dazedly.

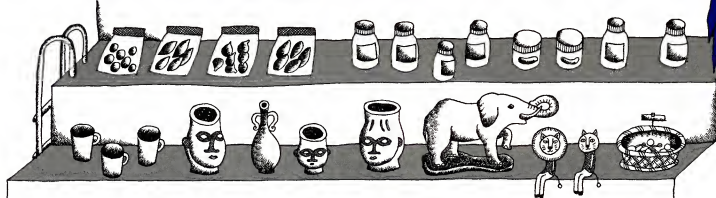
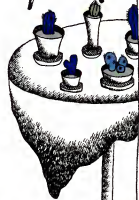
Among them there was
one whose name I did know.
Nepenthes rafflesiana.
It's a well-known
carnivorous plant.
I peered inside,
curious as to how it
survived in here with
no insects around.
That's when I noticed bits
of cut-up fish inside.
Someone must be here.





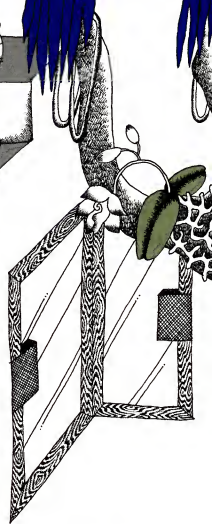
As I looked down at the water,
I saw some little rice fish.
There was a small placard that read,
"please don't feed the guppies."
A heaven where you weren't
allowed to feed the guppies
wouldn't ever exist, I thought,
and I came back to my senses.
I continued to follow the signs
that said, "this way."



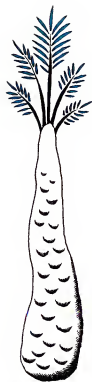
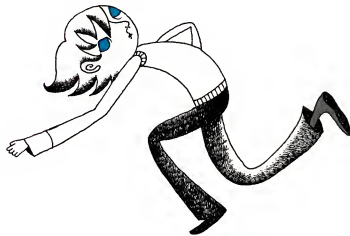


"Sure am."
"Do they sell well?"
"Of course not.
I haven't had a customer
for hundreds of years."
"Then you just take care of them?"
"No, cactuses don't need real taking
care of. Water 'em too much, and
they'll just die, so I've got nothing
to do. I'm so bored I could die.
I wish someone would take my place,"
the old man said, looking up at me.

As I walked around the pond,
I passed some orchids and some
large flowers whose names I didn't
know, and then came to the exit.
Near the exit was a souvenir shop
selling picture postcards and dried
fruits and stuff.
Next to a small display of cactuses,
an old man sat hunched over.
Without thinking, I spoke.
I was starved for conversation.
"Are you selling these cactuses?"



The old man had no eyes.
Scared, I ran for the exit.
"Not for hundreds of years!"
the old man called out after me.
I was so scared I just kept running.
As I ran, I vaguely remembered
my dad once buying me a cactus
that I over-watered and killed.
Somehow, a memory floated
faintly up to the surface of my
mind that my dad had taken me
to this botanical garden long ago.





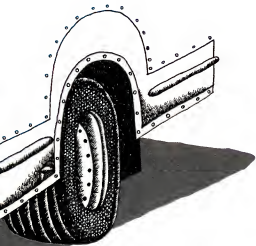
"You can't get a good bulb if
you don't cut the flower off."
"What will you do with the bulbs?"
"Plant them."
"What are you planting them for?"
"When the flowers bloom,
I'll cut them off to make more bulbs."
"And those bulbs...?"



Exhausted, I came to a stop
at a large garden of tulips.
Hard at work was a busy-looking man
wearing work clothes and glasses.
Wondering what he was doing,
I drew closer and saw he was
snipping the flowers off of each
tulip that had already bloomed.
Surprised, I asked him,
"What are you doing?"
"Making bulbs,"
the man answered.



When I stepped out of the exit,
I found the old bus parked outside,
almost as if it had been waiting for me.
The door opened as I approached.
I got on as if it were normal.
"All aboard for Tenjin Bridge!"
Tenjin Bridge was the bridge
that spanned the Tenjin River
near my old kindergarten.
I hadn't been there in years.
This time, the bus proceeded
at a slower pace.

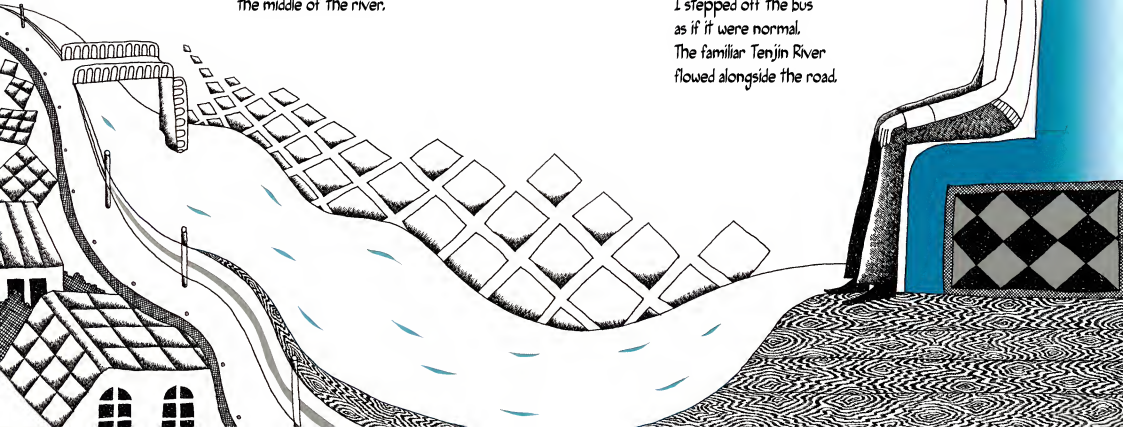


I fell silent.
As he quietly continued his work,
the kindly man suddenly seemed creepy.
I just wanted to get out of the garden.
I followed the signposts to the exit.
"There is nothing here,"
I thought.
"This must be hell,"
I felt for some reason.



The bridge itself was broken in half,
and I couldn't get to the other side.
I had, of course, thought
that I should cross the river,
so I was somewhat perplexed.
It must have been destroyed
by the recent typhoon.
I followed the river upstream.
Something was sparkling in
the middle of the river.

I swayed with the rhythm
of the bus, possessed of
the curious feeling that
I was heading into the past.
"Last stop, Tenjin Bridge.
Make sure you have all of
your belongings with you
when you exit the bus."
The door opened.
I stepped off the bus
as if it were normal.
The familiar Tenjin River
flowed alongside the road.



There should have been multiple bridges upriver, but I walked and walked and never came across a single one.

The fuzziness of my memory giving me a feeling akin to unease, I simply continued walking.

After a while, I spotted a light on the other side of the river.

It seemed someone was setting off fireworks.

A man, a woman, and two children, all in yukata, looked to be having fun.

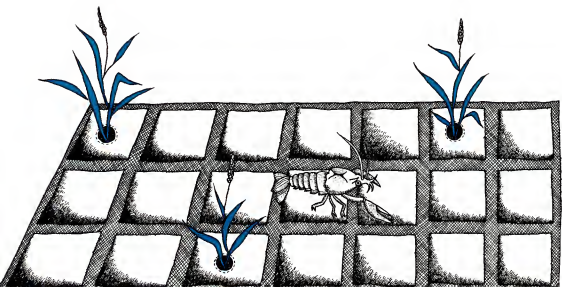


Fish were jumping out of the water. When I was little, there were no fish here. Maybe the recent trend of eco-consciousness had resulted in a cleaner river. I continued on upstream. For some reason, I felt a strong urge to cross to the other side. I felt like there was something there, or at the very least, that once I got there, I would understand something.

Wondering if it was
really the season for that,
I stared at them, and in
the light of the fireworks,
I could see that they had no faces.
A shiver of fear raced up my spine,
and I lost all desire to cross over
to the other side.
I just quietly headed upstream.
The road became a narrow gravel
path covered in weeds, and the
river itself grew narrow, too.
The pond that was the source of
the river must not be far away.




I climbed the concrete steps
and onto the embankment.
A child was crouched by the side
of the lake doing something.
As I got closer, I could see
that he was catching crayfish.
He would catch one, then cut
off its tail and use that as bait
to catch the next one.
There was a large pile of
crayfish heads beside him.
Without thinking, I asked,
"What are you doing?"



But I'd never been there before.
Several children had drowned in that pond,
and my parents always told me that it was
dangerous so I should never, ever go there.
I came to the pond.
It was surrounded by a concrete embankment
with a clay pipe sticking out from which water
spilled forth.
The river was now only about a meter wide,
so I could have jumped across if I'd wanted to,
but it didn't seem important anymore.



"Catching crayfish."
"But they'll all die that way,
and you won't have any to bring home."
"I don't have a home to bring them to."
When he turned around,
I stared at his face in shock.
It was Ito-kun, who had been
in kindergarten with me.
He was a year younger than me,
but he was half black,
so everyone knew who he was.
He had disappeared suddenly one day
when we were still in kindergarten,
and there were rumors that he'd died.
No one knew why he'd died or
what really happened.



"You should hurry up and go home.
You shouldn't be here.
Your mom was always telling you
to stay away, wasn't she?"
Ito-kun said.
"What about you?"
"I'm me."
He had a very strong manner of
speaking, not at all what I'd expect
from a child.
I felt like Ito-kun was rejecting me.
I had no choice but to go back
the way I came.
Maybe it was because there was
a slight slope, but the trip back
took no time at all.
And of course, that bus
was waiting for me.

The grownups had refused to tell us.
And now here was that same Ito-kun,
still a child, catching crayfish.
"Ito-kun?"
"Yeah?"
"Do you remember me?"
We were in kindergarten together."
He looked at me sullenly and said,
"I'm not the one that remembers you.
You're the one that remembers me."
It was quite an ordinary observation,
but it was like he said something very
odd to me, and I felt strange.



That's right. I'd figured as much.
"Then take me wherever I'm supposed to go."
"Will do."

The bus began to move slowly.
The view outside the window was familiar,
yet I couldn't shake the feeling that
it had nothing to do with me.

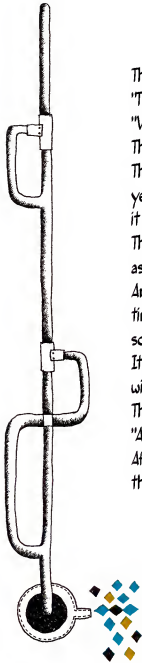
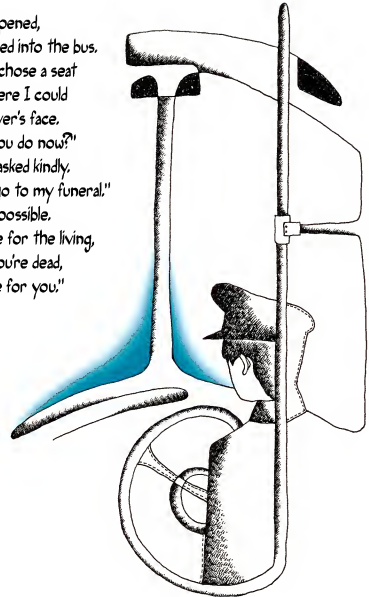
The bus turned corner after corner,
as if it had some specific destination.
And then, although it didn't feel like any
time had passed, we soon came to a stop
somewhere that really was unfamiliar.

It was a small mountain village,
with houses nestled low in the foothills.

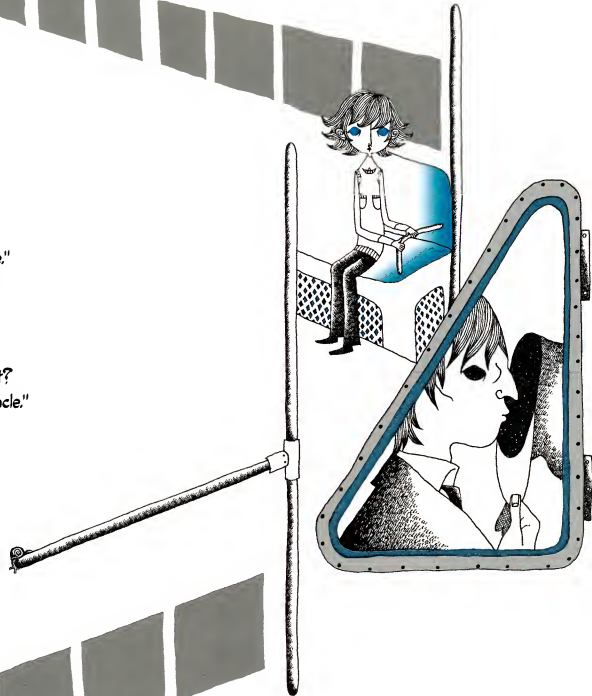
The door opened.

"All right, this is the last stop for real this time.
After this, it's all up to you,"
the driver said, doffing his cap.

The door opened,
and I stepped into the bus.
This time I chose a seat
in front where I could
see the driver's face.
"What will you do now?"
the driver asked kindly.
"I want to go to my funeral."
"That's not possible.
Funerals are for the living,
and since you're dead,
it's no place for you."



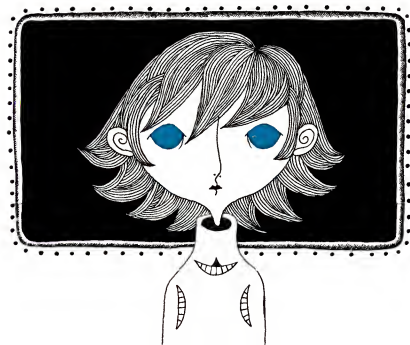
I recognized his face.
It was the face of my uncle,
whose fast living had led him to an
early grave when I was very little.
I barely even remembered him.
"What are you doing here, Uncle?"
"That's not something you should ask me."
"Maybe so, but there are just too many
things I don't know. Why are you here,
and why are you a bus driver, and what
did you want to show me, and where are
you taking me, and what should I do next?
I don't know anything. Please tell me, Uncle."

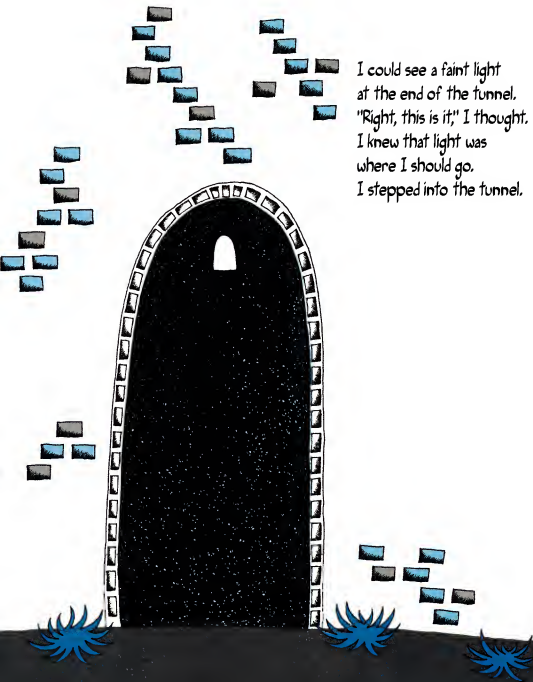


There was a loud
engine rumble behind me,
and when I turned around,
the bus had already gone.
The sound of the engine
grew fainter and fainter
until it disappeared
into the night.



With a lonesome expression,
he said, "I'd tell you if I could,
but there's really nothing
I can say to you."
"Then just tell me one thing.
What is this place? What is this world?"
"It is your faint memories, your desires."
"I have no desires."
"Then that is your desire."
My uncle looked down and
put his cap back on.
"Now please get off. I have to go."
I got off the bus.





I could see a faint light
at the end of the tunnel.
"Right, this is it," I thought.
I knew that light was
where I should go.
I stepped into the tunnel.

I was all alone.
I was scared and lonely and so,
so worried I was almost in tears.
But I didn't cry.
If what my uncle said was true,
if my desire that was a lack of
desire had brought me here,
then, while I couldn't exactly
call it confidence, a sort of
belief that my desire that
was a lack of desire would
have brought me to where
I should go propelled my feet.
I began to walk.
Not knowing where I was going
or what I was heading towards,
I walked down the unfamiliar
streets.
At some point the streets
converged into a single road,
and I could see a tunnel up ahead.



I reached the end of the tunnel.
Before me was a wide grassy plain that
stretched as far as the eye could see.
In the sky hung a small light, not the moon,
that cast a yellow glow over the zebra grass.
I pushed through the grass towards that small light.



For the first time,
there was a confidence
in my step as I moved
rapidly through the dank
tunnel towards the light.
I felt a faint sense of
something very gentle
and warm in that light.



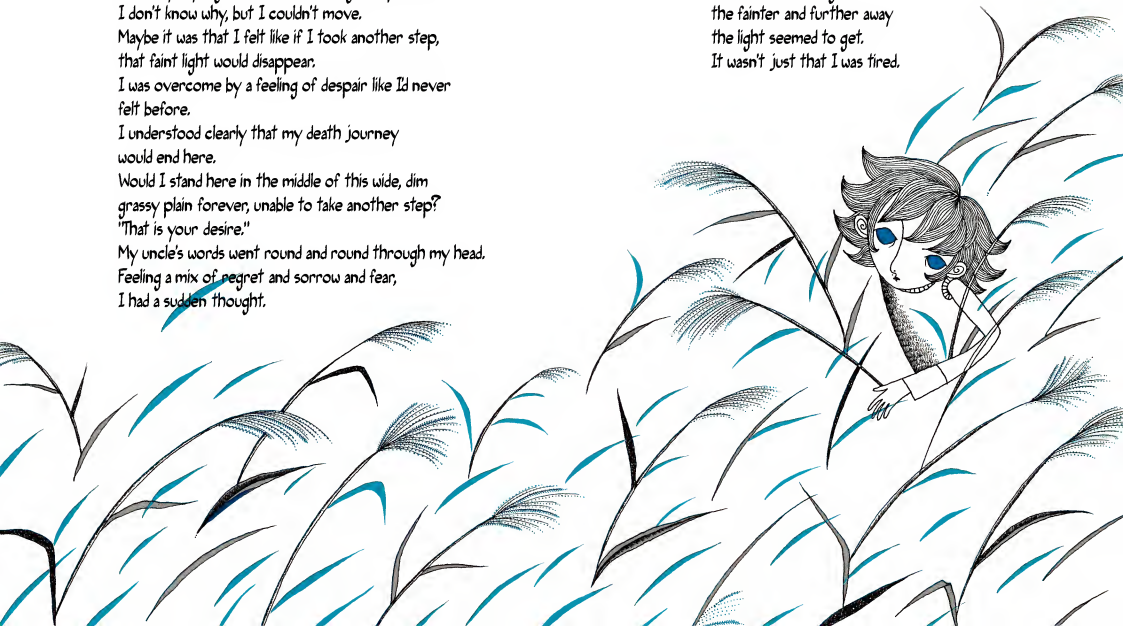
Suddenly my legs wouldn't take a single step more.
I don't know why, but I couldn't move.
Maybe it was that I felt like if I took another step,
that faint light would disappear.
I was overcome by a feeling of despair like I'd never
felt before.

I understood clearly that my death journey
would end here.

Would I stand here in the middle of this wide, dim
grassy plain forever, unable to take another step?
"That is your desire."

My uncle's words went round and round through my head.
Feeling a mix of regret and sorrow and fear,
I had a sudden thought.

But the further I got,
the fainter and further away
the light seemed to get.
It wasn't just that I was tired.



If this is my
world after death,
then I wish for
complete nothingness.

